

Washington DC—It is not only foreign terrorism, but also homegrown terrorism, as most eminently displayed by the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, that America must address to maintain the nation's homeland and national security. With this understanding, Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) voted for the passage of the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act (H.R. 1955). The bill represents a concerted effort to better understand violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism in order to prevent them.

— “There has been growing concern in the United States about ‘homegrown’ terrorism. Recent events such as the arrest of Christopher Riendeau in Georgia, have shown that radicalization and the promotion of ideologically based violence is not confined overseas,” said the Congressman. “Law enforcement officials have successfully blocked several ‘homegrown’ plans here in the United States, but not enough is being done. This measure attempts to explore the causes of homegrown terrorism and to draw from lessons learned in other countries.”

More specifically, this legislation:

- Creates a National Commission on the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Ideologically-Based Violence. The Commission will study the causes of radicalization and recommend corrective actions. The 10 commission members would be appointed by the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and congressional leaders, including the chairman and ranking members of the House and Senate Homeland Security Committees.
- Establishes a “Center for Excellence” to study violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism. The Center will study the programs of violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism over the long-term.
- Calls upon the U.S. government to work with our allies who have also been dealing with homegrown terrorism to learn what successful strategies they employ. Some of our closest allies, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, have had significant experience dealing with homegrown terrorism. The bill calls on the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and other relevant federal agencies to conduct a survey of methodologies used by key allies to prevent violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism in their nations.
- Requires the Department of Homeland Security to protect the constitutional rights of all Americans. The legislation emphasizes that any action by the Administration to prevent domestic terrorism “shall not violate the constitutional rights, civil rights and civil liberties of U.S. citizens and legal residents.” The bill also recognizes that the examination of radical ideology “should not be targeted based solely on race, ethnicity or religion.”

“Recent alleged plots by U.S. citizens to commit terrorist acts here in the United States highlight that violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism are a real domestic threat. This bill will help the U.S. government understand these threats and provide the tools to effectively protect our national security,” added Congressman Sestak.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in

Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.